



CARDIOVASCULAR AND RESPIRATORY DISEASE POLICY STATEMENT

**as of
November 2007**

The following minimum standards are applicable to all persons holding or seeking a Class D or a Class M license. Other standards may apply to those holding or seeking a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) (*See Federal Regulations*). The Commonwealth sets different standards for those seeking a license/certificate to transport school pupils/children. (*See Policy Statements specific to School Bus, 7D, and 7D1/2 licenses*).

For the purpose of these standards, "physician" is defined as "a medical doctor who is licensed to practice in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts".

The Registrar, or his designee, may require such additional evidence of the applicant or licensee's medical qualification criteria as he deems appropriate, or may modify these standards as an individual case may require.

I. CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE STANDARDS:

A. Any licensee or applicant who is medically determined to be a Class IV heart patient, according to the American Heart Association (AHA) functional guidelines for classifying heart disease, is not eligible for a learner's permit or license. Individuals classified as AHA functional Class IV may suffer symptoms of heart failure even at rest and therefore are unsafe to operate motor vehicles. Accordingly, any licensee who is an AHA functional Class IV heart patient shall be required to voluntarily surrender his or her driver's license or be subject to suspension or revocation.

B. Individuals who are determined to be AHA functional Class I, II, or III do not suffer symptoms of heart failure at rest. Therefore, these individuals are presumed safe to operate a motor vehicle and will continue to be eligible to receive or hold a learner's permit or license until such time as the Registry has cause to believe that such individuals are unsafe to operate a motor vehicle.

C. In instances where the Registry has cause to believe that an AHA functional Class I, II, or III heart patient is unsafe to operate a motor vehicle, the Registry may restrict, suspend, or

revoke driving privileges for that person.

D. Change of cardiovascular disease functional status:

Individuals who were formerly determined to be AHA functional Class IV heart patients and have since been reevaluated and determined to be AHA functional Class I, II, or III heart patients must submit the following documentation from the physician to the Registry's Medical Affairs Branch in order to be eligible to restore driving privileges:

- (a) medical documentation of the status of the individual's heart condition, including AHA functional class and accompanying symptomatology (if any); and
- (b) a written statement from the physician certifying that, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty, the individual is medically qualified to operate a motor vehicle safely.

E. Implantable cardiac defibrillator standard:

Any licensee or applicant who has had an implanted cardiac defibrillator (AICD) placed for a "sudden death event" shall not be eligible for an active license until a 6-month period during which there is documentation of no episodes of appropriate device firing.

Individuals for whom the AICD is placed purely for prophylactic reason will not be subject to this "waiting" period. However, if such individuals are determined to have an AICD that appropriately "fires", they will be considered the same as an individual who has had a "sudden death event" and be subject to the waiting period outlined below.

(2) If at any time after implantation, the AICD has triggered, whether during the initial six month period or later, the individual will be required to voluntarily surrender his or her license or be subject to suspension or revocation until such time as the individual can provide the information described below in subsection (3).

(3) Upon completion of the six month "trigger free" period, the individual is eligible to regain his or her license privileges, provided he or she can submit the following information from his or her physician to the Registry's Medical Affairs Branch:

- (a) a description of the individual's current heart condition, including AHA functional class and accompanying symptomatology (if any); and
- (b) status of the implanted cardiac defibrillator including whether the device has triggered and if so, the exact date of the last trigger; and
- (c) a certification from the physician that, to a reasonable degree of medical

certainty, the physician has determined that the individual is asymptomatic, that the device has not triggered for at least six months, and that the individual is medically qualified to operate a motor vehicle safely, with specific reasons provided for that determination.

II. PULMONARY/ RESPIRATORY DISEASE STANDARD

A. Any licensee or applicant for a learner's permit or license, whose O₂ saturation level is greater than 88% at rest or with minimal exertion, with or without supplemental oxygen, will be presumed safe to operate a motor vehicle and will continue to be eligible to receive or hold a learner's permit or license until such time as the Registry has cause to believe that an individual is unsafe to operate a motor vehicle.

B. Any licensee or applicant for a learner's permit or license, whose O₂ saturation level is 88% or less at rest or with minimal exertion, even with supplemental oxygen, is not eligible for a learner's permit or license. A licensee whose O₂ saturation level is 88% or less at rest or with minimal exertion, even with supplemental oxygen, shall be required to voluntarily surrender his or her license, or be subject to suspension or revocation. The Registry's Medical Advisory Board has determined that these individuals possess a significant threat of loss of consciousness, cognitive dysfunction, and risk of heart failure at any given time and therefore are unsafe to operate a motor vehicle.

C. Change of O₂ saturation level:

Applicants or licensees whose O₂ saturation level was 88% or less at rest or with minimal exertion, even with supplemental oxygen, and whose saturation level has changed to greater than 88% at rest or with minimal exertion, with or without supplemental oxygen, may be eligible to obtain or regain licensing privileges by providing the following information from their physician to the Registry's Medical Affairs Branch:

- (a) medical documentation that his or her O₂ saturation level is greater than 88% at rest or with minimal exertion; and
- (b) a certification that, to a reasonable degree of medical certainty, the individual is medically qualified to operate a motor vehicle safely.

D. Respiratory disease standards: FEV-1 levels (in liters):

Applicants or licensees whose FEV-1 (forced expiratory (respiratory) volume in one second) level is 1.2 liters or less will be required to submit an O₂ saturation test result in order to be eligible for a learner's permit or license. The Registry's Medical Advisory Board has determined that individuals whose FEV-1 level is 1.2 liters or less may reasonably be expected to be symptomatic for respiratory or heart failure

and therefore require a more extensive evaluation of their ability to operate a motor vehicle safely. Upon receipt of the O₂ saturation test, the Registry shall use the above O₂ saturation level criteria in evaluating the individual's ability to operate a motor vehicle safely.